

# PROPOSAL EVALUATION

## Proposition 50, Chapter 8

### Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program

### Implementation Step 2 Proposals

**PIN:** 10061  
**Applicant Name:** County of Plumas  
**Project Title:** Upper Feather River Watershed and Water Quality Improvement Project

**Funds Requested:** \$ 9,949,897  
**Total Project Cost:** \$ 13,966,586

<b>Total Proposal Score:</b>	<b>98</b>
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**Description:** The Upper Feather River IRWM partner agencies proposal includes stream restoration and erosion control at priority sites in the Plumas National Forest; new wetlands to expand municipal tertiary wastewater treatment; well inventory and capping in Sierra Valley to prevent groundwater contamination; implementing model management practices on two Feather River Land Trust ranches in Sierra and Genesee Valleys; and a modeling program in Sierra Valley to support integrated land and water management decision making. The projects create 37 acres of constructed wetlands, rewater 1,300 acres of desertified meadow, reduce summer water temperatures, improve wastewater treatment, restore 50 miles of degraded perennial streams, and provide essential data and tools for future management decisions.

**Question: Adopted IRWMP and Proof of Formal Adoption** 5

The applicant provided a copy of the MOU that states the IRWMP has been adopted and endorsed by the four participating agencies - County of Plumas, the Plumas National Forest, the Sierra Valley Groundwater Management District, and the Plumas County Flood Control and Water Conservation District.

**Question: Description of Region** 5

The IRWMP adequately addresses each of the criteria. The applicant did not directly address the ecological processes or the environmental resources criteria. However, the IRWMP contains an in-depth review of the region's resources.

**Question: Objectives** 5

IRWMP Chapter 1 provides the background into the documents that contributed to the IRWMP and the method by which the regional planning objectives were determined. Chapter 2 breaks down the goals and objectives into the major water-related objectives and potential conflicts. Chapter 7 provides a comprehensive look at the objectives with a breakdown of the goals, individual objectives, and appropriate actions.

**Question: Water Management Strategies and Integration** 4

The IRWMP addresses each of the water management strategies. The scope of the IRWMP seems to encompass all of the water management strategies. However, discussion specific to how these strategies work together and create added benefits through the integration of multiple water management strategies is not identified within the IRWMP.

**Question: Priorities and Schedule** 4

The IRWMP has regional priorities addressed, but specific projects with specific locations are not discussed. The IRWMP packages the implementation strategies as a regional plan and a general approach. The IRWMP discusses the regional priorities and some of the short- and long-term plans.

**Question: Implementation** 5

The IRWMP has a list of projects to implement. The IRWMP also provides a timeline. At least one of the signatories is assigned to each project. The projects are primarily intended to address water quality and water supply concerns. The IRWMP states that the projects are interdependent, but are designed such that they can be implemented separately if needed due to funding constraints.

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***Question: Impacts and Regional Benefits***

4

The IRWMP does not provide a discussion of any negative impacts from the implementation of the projects or provide a statement that an evaluation was done. The IRWMP discusses the advantages of a regional plan as it links other localized mandatory plans into a watershed-wide plan. The IRWMP indirectly connects the water quality and water source improvements to the hydroelectric energy production, assumed to provide energy outside of the region.

***Question: Technical Analysis and Plan Performance***

5

The Feather River Coordinated Resource Management Program has been in existence and implementing watershed improvement projects since 1984. A watershed scale monitoring program, to track long-term trends in watershed condition, has been in place since 2001. The IRWMP appears to be based on good science and has measures in place to track performance.

***Question: Data Management***

3

The IRWMP states that the participating agencies plan to develop a centralized data management system for the Upper Feather River Watershed to share IRWMP information with stakeholders, but the system does not exist. The applicant does not reference SWAMP in the IRWMP.

***Question: Financing***

3

The IRWMP describes a feasible program for project financing, but does not specifically identify all beneficiaries or discuss ongoing support and O&M financing of implemented projects. The water resource projects are currently being supported by several agencies listed in the IRWMP, but there is little discussion dedicated to this subject. There is no reference to any other funding sources. The IRWMP does not make any connection between the existing funding sources and the new projects.

***Question: Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability***

5

The IRWMP is developed and adopted by the principal planning and land management authorities in the watershed. Most of IRWMP Chapter 1 is dedicated to discussing the existing seven local mandatory planning documents and how they have been used to create the IRWMP. The applicant discusses the participation of the existing signatories and the intent of bringing in more participating agencies. The applicant provides a good representation of how the planning documents relate to the management strategies. There appears to be good coordination with other local entities such as Feather River Coordinated Resource Management, Resource Conservation Districts, the Feather River Land Trust, and other special districts.

***Question: Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination***

4

It appears that there are standing relationships within the region that have been used to help create the IRWMP. The IRWMP identifies public outreach activities generally and has a large list of existing participants. However, the IRWMP lacks adequate discussion of outreach to the general public and new participants or stakeholders. The IRWMP includes a discussion of social and cultural characteristics.

<b>Weighted IRWMP Total Score: 26</b>
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***Question: Work Plan***

9

The applicant proposes seven projects for the Upper Feather River watershed and targets the North and Middle Forks of the Feather River, which are the two largest water sources for Lake Oroville. The work items are organized by budget category but lack the level of detail, description, and sequencing of tasks that would make it clear that the projects are ready to be implemented. Plans and specifications are provided for only four of seven projects. QAPPs, PAEPs, and CEQA compliance are identified as work items. The permits which are needed are listed though few have been gained at this time. The Quincy Wastewater Treatment and Wetlands Project lack critical details, such as current effluent quality, the continued need for NPDES permitting, and the impacts of wetland treatment. Details on how certain tasks are conducted and how the projects will proceed is lacking.

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***Question: Budget***

3

The applicant has submitted the summary B-1 table and three detailed budget tables. The largest projects are the Last Chance Creek and National Forest Water Quality projects. Supporting documentation, such as engineering cost estimates, to back-up costs for construction and implementation are not provided. The National Forest Water Quality Project includes Administration Overhead, which may not be eligible for funding. Only direct project costs are eligible. Construction and implementation contingencies for three out of seven projects are at or below 5%. Overall, the budgets appear reasonable and agree with the work plan.

***Question: Funding Match***

2

The funding match is 29% of the total proposal costs.

***Question: Schedule***

3

The applicant submitted only a summary schedule for its suite of seven projects. The applicant should have also included seven separate project specific schedules. The summary schedule does not show enough consistency with the work plans. It appears that three projects are ready to proceed before December 1, 2007, and the other projects will start in 2008 and 2009. However, due to the lack of project-specific details, it is not possible to determine whether the schedule is reasonable.

***Question: Scientific and Technical Merit***

12

The scientific and technical merit has been thoroughly studied and documented through modeling studies, watershed assessments, past project implementation, and watershed and project scale monitoring. Applicant has provided 15 technical documents and 13 economic analysis documents. However, the applicant does not discuss data gaps or reference them to specific work items in the work plan.

***Question: Monitoring, Assessment and Performance Measures***

5

The applicant provides seven PAEP tables and they are complete and consistent with the guidance provided. The output and outcome indicators are reasonable. The outcome indicators appear to evaluate the changing results and most of the targets can be feasibly reached within the life of the proposal.

***Question: Economic Analysis***

9

The PV of quantified benefits is \$6.74 million and the PV of costs is \$11.9 million. Overall, the assessments of benefits relative to costs are average. There is a good description of how projects contribute to the IRWMP, but there is no cost detail on individual projects. The quantified benefits include Water Supply and Water Quality Benefits and Other Expected Benefits (power generation and flood attenuation) without any apparent double-counting. Water supply benefits are valued at \$110/AF using an estimate for the Sacramento Valley. It is not clear why that estimate would apply to this region. The benefit entries in Tables C-4 and C-5 are difficult to interpret, but the calculations appear adequate. Some discounting corrections were needed.

***Question: Other Expected Benefits***

8

The Other Expected Benefits are supported with adequate documentation that provides qualitative and quantitative information. It is very likely that these benefits will be realized upon completion of the proposed projects. The applicant states there will be additional hydroelectric power generation potential, increased fisheries, and reduced turbine maintenance, but does not provide supporting documentation. There is uncertainty that the intended results of the upstream projects will yield lower water temperature benefits at the lower elevations; monitoring will need to be done to confirm.

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#### ***Question: Program Preferences***

**3**

The applicant states the proposed projects address 4 out of 6 Program Preferences: integrated projects with multiple benefits, increase water supply reliability, improve water quality, and projects serving DACs. The Quincy Wastewater Treatment and Wetlands Project and the Sierra Valley Well Inventory and Capping Project address safe drinking water and water quality for DACs. Long-term attainability of water quality standards and significantly reducing sediment loads may be likely, based on other projects in the region. However, this is not thoroughly documented in the application. In addition, the proposal lacks documentation of the breadth and magnitude of the Program Preferences to be implemented.

#### ***Question: Statewide Priorities***

**18**

The applicant states the proposed projects meet 3 out of 8 Statewide Priorities: reducing conflicts, implementing WMIs, and implementing the NPS Plan. There is moderate discussion of achieving statewide priorities, but not much discussion is provided on the certainty. While the application mentions temperature and mercury, it does not appear to implement a TMDL that is existing or under development. The link to CALFED is discussed in Attachment 16 and mostly addresses the improvements to water quality. There is a connection to the Bay-Delta system via the SWP through the Oroville Dam. Water savings would reduce the demand on the Bay-Delta. There appears to be a limited degree of certainty that the Statewide Priorities claimed can be achieved.

<b>Total Proposal Score:</b>	<b>98</b>
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